Rice University
Department of Economics
Econ 800 Research Seminar

Objectives and expectations

The purpose of Econ 800 is to assist students in the dissertation writing process. The primary objective of the course is to have students write an independent and original piece of research that is of sufficient quality to merit publication in an academic economics journal. Towards this objective, faculty mentor, and evaluate and critique the research of PhD students who are either preparing research before formally selecting a dissertation topic or actively engaged in dissertation research.

Each student who is taking Econ 800 will be assigned a faculty member as their Econ 800 advisor. The assigned faculty member will be the dissertation advisor if the student has already chosen one. Students are expected to meet regularly with their Econ 800 advisors, and make satisfactory progress in their research. At the end of the semester, the students are expected submit a report to their Econ 800 advisors as well as to the department detailing their progress during the semester. The report should include the research topics the students pursued through the semester, the names of the faculty members they interacted with regarding these topics, a description of the results they obtained and a discussion of the roadblocks they faced if they did not obtain any new results. The grades will be assigned by Econ 800 advisors on a pass/fail basis. In addition, the department may use the progress report to decide on funding priorities in future years.

Learning outcomes

- Identifying novel and important research questions in the student's preferred field of study
- Conducting a focused review of the relevant literature
- Developing research design and carrying out independent research
- Preparing and giving an oral presentation of research conducted during the semester
- Defending the research design and modeling choices

- Clearly and effectively communicating research results
- Critically assessing research manuscripts related to the student's field of study and in other related fields